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Subject: SFRA

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Mr. John Greis and Mr. David Wear

U.S. Forest Service

Re: Southern Forest Resource Assessment

Gentlemen,

As a long time resident of Atlanta, Georgia, I feel well qualified to address "sprawl". This phenomenon has a unique capability of swallowing everything in it's path, urban, rural and wilderness. Your assessment that "sprawl" is consuming much southern forest land is accurate when referring to private forest land and pine farms. It will be up to private land owners, with the assistance of state and federal forest professional guidance, to stem the tide of rampant "sprawl".

"sprawl" should not, must not, have any direct effect on public forest lands. Related problems such as acid rain and air pollution are a very real threat and must be addressed. Physical "sprawl" is an unnecessary situation that can be stopped with the stroke of a government pen. Certainly, development and road building should cease on all public lands. Extractive industry activities should be permanently precluded from public forests, especially logging. Economic concerns are of no human value when compared to environmental concerns. Natural assets; clean drinking water, clean air, soil retention, wildlife habitat, aesthetic and spiritual value of solitude and recreation far outweigh the benefits of "special interest" financial gain.

The vast majority of forested land in the Southeast is privately owned and should be sufficient to supply the wood products and paper industry. If, as your report states, pine timber is being cut at an unsustainable rate, industry will be forced to advance their technology or reduce their production. You say hardwood forests are soon to follow. This form of self destructive behavior is utter foolhardy.

National and State Forests belong to the American people (taxpayers/voters), not the wood products industry. Managing public forests as pine farms, in competition with private owners, serves no practical or moral purpose.. I urge you to approach public forest management from a natural, biodiversified, long term sustainability position.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical issue. Please keep me informed as to progress on this matter.

Respectfully,

James N. Stephens

Use it up-wear it out- make do or DO WITHOUT!